The Ethics [*Akhlāq*] of the People of Knowledge [*Ahl al-ʿIlm*]

Imām ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿAbdillāh b. Bāz

{رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ}

Dār as-Sa'ādah

دار السعادة

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Introduction[1]

الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على أشرف الأنبياء

والمرسلين، سيدنا ونبينا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين. وبعد

All praise is for Allāh, Lord of the worlds, and may blessings and peace be upon the noblest of the Prophets and Messengers, our master and our Prophet Moḥammad, and upon his family and all his Companions.

To proceed:

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This is a brief address in which I wished to clarify the ethics [*Akhlāq*] of the scholars [*ʿUlamā*] and what they ought to follow, taking as their example their greatest *Imām* and their model [*Qudwah*] in every good, namely our Prophet Moḥammad ibn ʿAbdillāh ﷺ, the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds, the leader of the radiant believers [*al-Ghurr al-Muḥajjalīn*], and the Imām of all callers [*Duʿāt*] to the path [*Sabīl*] of Allāh. I saw fit to give it the title: "*The Ethics [Akhlāq] of the People of Knowledge [Ahl al-ʿIlm].*"

It is not hidden from anyone who possesses even a small share of knowledge [*ʿIlm*] that the scholars [*ʿUlamā*] are the heirs [*Khulafāʾ*] of the prophets, for the prophets did not leave behind a *Dīnār* or a Dirham. Rather, they left behind knowledge [*ʿIlm*], and knowledge [*ʿIlm*] is what the Book of Allāh {عَزَّ وَجَلَّ} and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger ﷺ point to.

For this reason, when ʿĀʾishah {رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا} was asked about the character [*Khuluq*] of the Prophet ﷺ, she said: "*His character was the Qurʾān.*"

This great statement from ʿĀʾishah {رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا} directs us to the fact that his ethics [*Akhlāq*], ﷺ, were to follow the *Qurʾān*, to remain upright upon what it contains of commands [*Awāmir*] and prohibitions [*Nawāhī*], to embody the qualities praised by the Noble *Qurʾān* and commended in those who possess them, and to stay far away from every trait condemned by the *Qurʾān* and censured in those marked by it. It is a comprehensive, concise, and tremendous statement.

It is therefore most fitting that the people of knowledge [*Ahl al-ʿIlm*], among the callers [*Duʿāt*], teachers [*Mudarrisīn*], and students [*Ṭalabah*], give careful attention to the Book of Allāh, and turn to it fully, so that they may take from it the character traits [*Akhlāq*] that Allāh {عَزَّ وَجَلَّ} loves, remain upright upon them, and make them a settled character [*Khuluq*] and a method [*Minhāj*] by which they live wherever they may be.

Allāh {عَزَّ وَجَلَّ} says:

{إِنَّ هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ}

"*Indeed, this Qurʾān guides to that which is most upright.*" (***Sūrah al-Isrāʾ***, 17:9)

So, it is the guide to the way [*Ṭarīqah*] that is the best of ways [*Ṭuruq*] and the most rightly guided of paths [*Subul*]. Is there any goal [*Hadf*] for the believer [*Muʾmin*] greater than being upon the most rightly guided of paths [*Subul*], the most upright of them, and the soundest of them?

There is no doubt that this is the loftiest of goals [*Ahdāf*], the most important of them, and the purest of them. It is the tremendous character [*Khuluq ʿAẓīm*] with which Allāh praised His Prophet Moḥammad ﷺ in *Sūrah al-Qalam*, where He {سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ} says:

{نٓ ۚ وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ ۝ مَا أَنْتَ بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ بِمَجْنُونٍ ۝ وَإِنَّ لَكَ لَأَجْرًا غَيْرَ مَمْنُونٍ ۝ وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ}

"*Nūn. By the pen and what they write. You are not, by the favor of your Lord, a madman. And indeed, for you is a reward uninterrupted. And indeed, you are surely upon tremendous character.*" (***Sūrah al-Qalam***, 68:1-4)

So, all the people of knowledge [*Ahl al-ʿIlm*] and the students of knowledge [*Ṭalabatu-l-ʿIlm*] must give careful attention to this character [*Khuluq*], and devote themselves to the Book of Allāh in recitation [*Qirāʾah*], reflection [*Tadabbur*], sound understanding [*Taʿaqqul*], and action [*ʿAmal*].
He {سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ} says:

{كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ}

"*[This is] a blessed Book which We have sent down to you so that they may reflect upon its verses, and so that those of sound understanding may take heed.*" (***Sūrah Ṣād***, 38:29)

They are the people of sound intellects [*ʿUqūl Ṣaḥīḥah*] whom Allāh has granted the ability to distinguish between truth [*Ḥaqq*] and falsehood [*Bāṭil*], and between guidance [*Hudá*] and misguidance [*Ḍalāl*].

Whoever desires this tremendous character [*Khuluq ʿAẓīm*] must turn fully to the Book of Allāh {عَزَّ وَجَلَّ}, giving it careful attention through recitation [*Tilāwah*], reflection [*Tadabbur*], and sound understanding [*Taʿaqqul*], through mutual study [*Mudhākarah*] with his peers, and through asking the people of knowledge [*Ahl al-ʿIlm*] about whatever is difficult for him, while also benefiting from the relied-upon books of exegesis [*Kutub at-Tafsīr al-Muʿtamadah*], and while giving careful attention to the Prophetic Way [*as-Sunnah an-Nabawīyah*], for it explains the *Qurʾān* and points to it.

In this way, he may proceed upon this upright method [*Nahj Qawīm*], and so that he may become one of the people devoted to the Book of Allāh, in recitation [*Qirāʾah*], reflection [*Tadabbur*], and action [*ʿAmal*].

For the Jews have the Book of Allāh, the Christians have the Book of Allāh, and the evil scholars [*ʿUlamā as-Sūʾ*] of this *Ummah* have the Book of Allāh. So, what did these become? They became among the worst of people when they opposed the Book of Allāh, and Allāh became angry with them. The same applies to their followers, namely everyone who opposes the Book of Allāh knowingly and proceeds upon the way [*Nahj*] of the astray ones [*Ghāwīn*] among the Jews, the Christians, and others. His ruling [*Ḥukm*] is their ruling [*Ḥukm*].

What is meant is that we must act upon the Book of Allāh, and that it must become a character [*Khuluq*] for us, just as it was a character [*Khuluq*] for those who believed before us, and a guidance [*Hudá*] and a healing [*Shifāʾ*].

And Allāh {جَلَّ وَعَلَا} said to His Prophet ﷺ:

{قُلْ هَٰذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى ٱللَّهِ عَلَىٰ بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا۠ وَمَنِ ٱتَّبَعَنِي وَسُبْحَٰنَ ٱللَّهِ وَمَآ أَنَا۠ مِنَ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ}

"*Say: This is my path [Sabīlī]. I call to Allāh upon clear insight [Baṣīrah], I and whoever follows me. And glory be to Allāh, and I am not among the polytheists [Mushrikīn].*" (***Sūrah Yūsuf***, 12:108)

This too is from his character [*Akhlāq*], ﷺ, and from the character [*Akhlāq*] of the people of knowledge [*Ahl al-ʿIlm*] altogether: the people of knowledge and insight [*Baṣīrah*], the people of knowledge and faith [*Īmān*], the people of knowledge and piety [*Taqwá*].

As for those who possess knowledge without piety [*Taqwá*] and faith [*Īmān*], they have no share in that, because from the character [*Akhlāq*] of the people of knowledge [*Ahl al-ʿIlm*] is calling to Allāh upon clear insight [*Baṣīrah*], together with action [*ʿAmal*], and clarifying the truth [*Ḥaqq*] with its legislative proofs [*Adillah Sharʿīyah*] in speech, deed, and creed [*ʿAqīdah*].

They are the callers [*Duʿāt*] who call creation, and their guides [*Hudāt*], in the light of the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger ﷺ. They do not sell the verses [*Āyāt*] of Allāh for a small price. Rather, they convey to the people the religion [*Dīn*] of Allāh, direct them to the truth [*Ḥaqq*] with which Allāh sent His Prophet ﷺ, and remain patient over harm [*Adhá*] in all circumstances [*Aḥwāl*].

By this it becomes known that whoever calls others while upon ignorance [*Jahālah*] is not upon the character [*Khuluq*] of the Prophet ﷺ, nor upon the character [*Khuluq*] of the people of knowledge [*Ahl al-ʿIlm*]. Rather, he

is a criminal [*Mujrim*], because Allāh {سُبْحَانَهُ} made speaking about Him without knowledge [*Qawl ʿalá Allāh bi-Ghayr ʿIlm*] even higher than the rank of associationism [*Shirk*], due to the immense corruption [*Fasād*] that follows from it.

He {تَعَالَى} said in His clear Book:

{قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَالْإِثْمَ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَنْ تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ}

"*Say: My Lord has only forbidden immoralities [Fawāḥish], whether open or concealed, sin [Ithm], transgression [Baghy] without right, that you associate with Allāh [Shirk] that for which He has sent down no authority [Sulṭān], and that you say concerning Allāh that which you do not know.*"

(***Sūrah al-Aʿrāf***, 7:33)

So, He {سُبْحَانَهُ} placed speaking about Him without knowledge [*Qawl ʿalá Allāh bi-Ghayr ʿIlm*] at the top of the *Marātib* [levels] of forbidden matters [*Muḥarramāt*], because this verse contains an ascending progression from what is lesser to what is more severe. It concludes with associationism [*Shirk*], then speaking about Allāh without knowledge [*Qawl ʿalá Allāh bi-Ghayr ʿIlm*]. By this, the danger [*Khaṭar*] of speaking about Allāh without knowledge becomes clear, and that it is from the gravest evils [*Munkarāt ʿAẓīmah*] and the most dangerous major sins [*Kabāʾir Khaṭīrah*], because of the evil consequences [*ʿAwāqib Sayyiʾah*] it contains and the misguidance [*Iḍlāl*] of the people.

And in another verse in *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, He {سُبْحَانَهُ} made clear that speaking about Him without knowledge [*Qawl ʿalá Allāh bi-Ghayr ʿIlm*] is from that to which *Shayṭān* calls and which he commands. So, it is not fitting for the student of knowledge [*Ṭālib al-ʿIlm*] to proceed in the ranks [*Rikāb*] of *Shayṭān*. He {جَلَّ وَعَلَا} says:

{يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ۝ إِنَّمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالسُّوءِ وَالْفَحْشَاءِ وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ}

"*O mankind, eat from whatever is in the earth lawful [Ḥalāl] and good [Ṭayyib], and do not follow the footsteps [Khuṭuwāt] of Shayṭān. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy [ʿAdūw Mubīn]. He only commands you to evil [Sūʾ], immorality [Faḥshāʾ], and that you say concerning Allāh that which you do not know.*" (***Sūrah al-Baqarah***, 2:168-169)

So, look, my brother, at what Allāh mentioned about this clear enemy [*ʿAdūw Mubīn*], and that he commands evil [*Sūʾ*], immorality [*Faḥshāʾ*], and speaking about Allāh without knowledge [*Qawl ʿalá Allāh bi-Ghayr ʿIlm*], because he knows the immense danger [*Khaṭar*] and corruption [*Fasād*] found in speaking about Him {سُبْحَانَهُ} without knowledge. For the one who speaks about Allāh without knowledge [*Qawl ʿalá Allāh bi-Ghayr ʿIlm*] declares the unlawful [*Ḥarām*] lawful, declares the lawful [*Ḥalāl*] unlawful, forbids the truth [*Ḥaqq*], and commands falsehood [*Bāṭil*], all because of his ignorance [*Jahl*].

So what is obligatory upon the people of knowledge [*Ahl al-ʿIlm*] and the students of knowledge [*Ṭalabatu-l-ʿIlm*] is to beware of speaking about Allāh without knowledge [*Qawl ʿalá Allāh bi-Ghayr ʿIlm*], and to give careful attention to the legislative proofs [*Adillah Sharʿīyah*], so that they may be upon knowledge [*ʿIlm*] regarding what they call to and what they forbid, and so that they may not speak about Allāh without knowledge [*Qawl ʿalá Allāh bi-Ghayr ʿIlm*].

And those who know Allāh [*al-ʿUlamā bi-llāh*] are the people who possess the greatest fear [*Khashyah*] of Allāh, and are the most complete in fear of Allāh and in stopping at His limits [*Ḥudūd*]. Allāh {تَعَالَى} says:

{إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى ٱللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ ٱلْعُلَمَٰٓؤُا}

"*It is only those of His servants who possess knowledge [al-ʿUlamā] that truly fear Allāh.*" (***Sūrah Fāṭir***, 35:28)

So, every Muslim fears Allāh, and every scholar [*ʿĀlim*] fears Allāh, but fear [*Khashyah*] varies in degree. The people who possess the greatest fear [*Khashyah*] of Allāh, and the most complete fear [*Khashyah*] of Allāh, are those who know Allāh [*al-ʿUlamā bi-llāh*], those who know His religion [*Dīn*]. They are not the scholars [*ʿUlamā*] of medicine, nor the scholars [*ʿUlamā*] of engineering, nor the scholars [*ʿUlamā*] of geography, nor the scholars [*ʿUlamā*] of calculation, nor the scholars [*ʿUlamā*] of this and that. Rather, they are the scholars [*ʿUlamā*] of Allāh, of His religion [*Dīn*], and of what His Messenger ﷺ brought, and at their head are the Messengers {عَلَيْهِمُ ٱلصَّلَاةُ وَٱلسَّلَامُ}.

So, the Messengers and the Prophets are the head of the scholars [*ʿUlamā*]. They are the example [*Qudwah*] of the scholars [*ʿUlamā*], and they are the leaders [*Aʾimmah*]. Those who came after them are successors [*Khulafāʾ*] to them. They inherited their knowledge [*ʿIlm*] and called to that to which they called.

It is reported in the *Ḥadīth*:

«العلماء ورثة الأنبياء»

"*The scholars [ʿUlamā] are the heirs [Warathah] of the Prophets.*"

So it is most fitting for the people of knowledge [*Ahl al-ʿIlm*], even if their time has come late, like our own time, that they follow the path and course [*Maslak*] of their righteous predecessors [*Awāʾil Akhyār*] in fear [*Khashyah*] of Allāh, in magnifying His command [*Amr*] and His prohibition [*Nahy*], in stopping at His limits [*Ḥudūd*], and in being supporters [*Anṣār*] of the truth [*Ḥaqq*] and callers [*Duʿāt*] to guidance [*Hudá*], not fearing, in the cause of the truth [*Ḥaqq*], the blame [*Lawmah*] of any blamer [*Lāʾim*].

By that, their knowledge [*ʿIlm*] becomes beneficial, their liability [*Dhimmah*] is cleared, and the people benefit through them.

So His statement {سُبْحَانَهُ}:

{إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى ٱللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ ٱلْعُلَمَاءُ}

"*It is only those of His servants who possess knowledge [al-ʿUlamā] that truly fear Allāh.*" (***Sūrah Fāṭir***, 35:28)

means complete fear [*al-Khashyah al-Kāmilah*]. So complete fear [*al-Khashyah al-Kāmilah*] belongs to the people of knowledge [*Ahl al-ʿIlm*], and the highest among them are the Messengers and the Prophets [*Rusul wa-l-Anbiyāʾ*], then those next best and next best from the people of knowledge [*Ahl al-ʿIlm*], according to their piety [*Taqwá*] toward Allāh, according to the breadth of their knowledge [*ʿIlm*], and according to the strength of their faith [*Īmān*], the completeness of their faith [*Īmān*], and their affirmation [*Taṣdīq*].

And when some of the Companions asked about the private worship of the Messenger ﷺ, it was as though they considered their worshipping little and said: "*Where are we in comparison to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, when Allāh has forgiven for him what came before of his sin and what came after*", as is established in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* from the *Ḥadīth* of ʿĀʾishah {رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا}.

Then one of them said: *As for me, I will pray and not sleep*. Another said: *As for me, I will fast and not break my fast*. Another said: *As for me, I will not sleep upon a bed*. Another said: *As for me, I will not eat meat.* That reached the Prophet ﷺ, so he addressed the people, praised Allāh, extolled Him, then said:

«أما والله إني لأخشاكم لله وأتقاكم له، ولكني أصلي وأنام، وأصوم وأفطر، وأتزوج النساء، فمن رغب عن سنتي فليس مني»

"*As for me, by Allāh, I am surely the most fearful of Allāh among you and the most mindful of Him among you. Yet I pray and I sleep, I fast and I break the fast, and I marry women. So, whoever turns away from my Sunnah is not from me.*"

Therefore, he ﷺ made clear that he was the most fearful of all people before Allāh, and that he was the most mindful [*Atqá*] of Allāh among them, and the most knowledgeable of what must be feared and guarded against. Thus were the Messengers before him. They were the most knowledgeable of all people concerning Allāh, and the most mindful [*Atqá*] of Him. Then after them come the scholars [*ʿUlamā*], each according to his rank.

Yet it does not follow from the perfection of fear [*Khashyah*] of Allāh and fear of Him that they are infallible [*Maʿṣūm*] from error. Rather, every scholar [ʿĀlim] may err. So, whenever the truth [*Ḥaqq*] becomes clear to him, he returns to it, just as the Prophet ﷺ said:

«كُلُّ بَنِي آدَمَ خَطَّاءٌ، وَخَيْرُ الْخَطَّائِينَ التَّوَّابُونَ»

"*All the children of Ādam are prone to error, and the best of those who err are those who constantly repent.*"

So, the student of knowledge [*Ṭālib al-ʿIlm*] must seek out the truth [*Ḥaqq*] through its proof [*Dalīl*], strive hard in that, ask his Lord for success [*Tawfīq*] and aid [*Iʿānah*], and make his intention [*Nīyah*] sincere. Then if he errs despite that, he has one reward [*Ajr*], and if he is correct, he has two rewards [*Ajrān*], just as the *Sunnah* from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ has authentically established.

Thus, fear [*Khashyah*] of Allāh requires stopping at the limits [*Ḥudūd*] of Allāh and proceeding upon the way [*Minhāj*] of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. If a person goes beyond that, it becomes strained excess [*Tanaṭṭuʿ*] and extremism [*Ghuluww*], and that is not permissible.

The scholar [*ʿĀlim*] is the one who stops at the limits [*Ḥudūd*] of Allāh in what is permitted [*Ibāḥah*] and what is prohibited [*Manʿ*], in action [*ʿAmal*] and in leaving off [*Tark*]. Yet along with that, he remains intensely cautious lest he speak about Allāh without knowledge [*Qawl ʿalá Allāh bi-Ghayr ʿIlm*], or act contrary to what he knows, and thus resemble the Jews in that.

And Allāh {سُبْحَانَهُ} mentioned regarding some of the practicing and pious people of the Book [*Ahl al-Kitāb*] praiseworthy qualities [*Khiṣāl Ḥamīdah*], as a reminder to us of that.

And He {تَعَالَى} said:

{لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ}

"*There was certainly in their narratives [Qaṣaṣ] a lesson [ʿIbrah] for those of sound understanding [Ulū al-Albāb].*" (***Sūrah Yūsuf***, 12:111)

So, in history [*Tārīkh*] and narratives [*Qaṣaṣ*] there are lessons [*ʿIbar*], as He {عَزَّ وَجَلَّ} said.

And He {سُبْحَانَهُ} said:

{لَيْسُوا سَوَاءً مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ أُمَّةٌ قَائِمَةٌ يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ آنَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَهُمْ يَسْجُدُونَ ۝ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ}

"*They are not all alike. Among the people of the Book [Ahl al-Kitāb] is an upright community [Ummah Qāʾimah]. They recite the verses [Āyāt] of Allāh in the hours of the night while they prostrate. They believe in Allāh and the Last Day [al-Yawm*

al-Ākhir], they command what is right [al-Maʿrūf], forbid what is wrong [al-Munkar], and hasten toward good deeds [Khayrāt]. And those are among the righteous [Ṣāliḥīn]." (***Sūrah Āl ʿImrān***, 3:113-114)

This is a model [*Namūdhaj*] of their good deeds [*Aʿmāl Ṭayyibah*], and these praiseworthy qualities [*Ṣifāt Ḥamīdah*] were mentioned by Allāh {سُبْحَانَهُ} regarding them so that we may follow them in these matters, take this course [*Maslak*], and take the people of goodness [*Ahl al-Khayr*] as our example.

Likewise, at the end of *Sūrah Āl ʿImrān*, He {جَلَّ وَعَلَا} says:

{وَإِنَّ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ خَاشِعِينَ لِلَّهِ لَا يَشْتَرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ}

"*And indeed, among the people of the Book [Ahl al-Kitāb] are those who believe in Allāh and in what was sent down to you and in what was sent down to them, humbly submissive [Khāshiʿīn] before Allāh. They do not sell the verses [Āyāt] of Allāh for a small price. Those will have their reward [Ajr] with their Lord. Indeed, Allāh is swift in reckoning [Ḥisāb].*" (***Sūrah Āl ʿImrān***, 3:199)

So, these noble qualities [*Khiṣāl Ḥamīdah*], which were taken up by the best of the people of the Book [*Ahl al-Kitāb*] and by those among their scholars [*ʿUlamā*] whom Allāh guided, are these: faith [*Īmān*] in Allāh, humility [*Khushūʿ*] and submission [*Khuḍūʿ*] to Allāh, obedience [*Ṭāʿah*] to Allāh {سُبْحَانَهُ}, and lowliness before Him {سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ}.

Then, along with that, they do not sell the verses [*Āyāt*] of Allāh for a small price, nor do they deny the truth [*Ḥaqq*] or conceal it, as their misguided scholars [*ʿUlamā Ḍāllūn*] did. They concealed the description [*Sīrah*] of Moḥammad ﷺ and concealed much of the truth [*Ḥaqq*] for the sake of their immediate share [*Ḥaẓẓ ʿĀjil*] and what they desired of the enjoyment [*Matāʿ*] of worldly life [*Dunyā*].

As for the people of knowledge and faith [*Ahl al-ʿIlm wa al-Īmān*], from the earlier ones and the later ones, the people of fear [*Khawf*] of Allāh, they speak the truth [*Ḥaqq*] and state it openly. They do not sell the verses [*Āyāt*] of Allāh for a small price. Rather, from their tremendous deeds [*Aʿmāl ʿAẓīmah*] are clarifying the truth [*Ḥaqq*], pointing to it, calling to it, warning against falsehood [*Bāṭil*], and instilling fear of it [*Tarhīb*]. They hope for the reward [*Thawāb*] of Allāh and fear His punishment [*ʿIqāb*], {سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ}.

And He {عَزَّ وَجَلَّ} said:

{أَفَمَنْ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ الْحَقُّ كَمَنْ هُوَ أَعْمَىٰ ۚ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ}

"*Is one who knows that what has been sent down to you from your Lord is the truth [Ḥaqq] like one who is blind? Only those of sound understanding [Ulū al-Albāb] take heed.*" (***Sūrah ar-Raʿd***, 13:19)

And He {تَعَالَى} said:

{قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ}

"*Say: Are those who know equal to those who do not know? Only those of sound understanding [Ulū al-Albāb] take heed.*" (***Sūrah az-Zumar***, 39:9)

And He {سُبْحَانَهُ} made clear in these two verses that the one who knows the truth [*Ḥaqq*] sent down from our Lord, and which is guidance [*Hudá*], soundness [*Ṣalāḥ*], and rectification [*Iṣlāḥ*], is not equal to one who is blind, who neither knows the truth [*Ḥaqq*] nor is guided to it, because of the *Fasād* [corruption] of his perception [*Taṣawwur*], the deviation [*Inḥirāf*] of his heart [*Qalb*], and the *Fasād* [corruption] of his intellect [*Lubb*]. These are not equal.

For this reason, He said:

{إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ}

"*Only those of sound understanding [Ulū al-Albāb] take heed.*"

So, He made clear that reflection [*Tadhakkur*] and clear perception [*Tabaṣṣur*] belong only to those of sound understanding [*Ulū al-Albāb*], and they are the people of sound and upright intellects [*ʿUqūl Ṣaḥīḥah Salīmah*].

Then He mentioned their tremendous qualities and said:

{ٱلَّذِينَ يُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِ ٱللَّهِ وَلَا يَنقُضُونَ ٱلْمِيثَاقَ}

"*Those who fulfill the covenant [ʿAhd] of Allāh and do not break the pact [Mīthāq].*" (***Sūrah ar-Raʿd***, 13:20)

These are the qualities of the people of knowledge and faith [*Ahl al-ʿIlm wa-l- Īmān*]. They are those who fulfill the covenant [*ʿAhd*] of Allāh and that which He entrusted to them. They render His due [*Ḥaqq*], remain upright upon His religion [*Dīn*] in word, deed, and creed [*ʿAqīdah*], and they do not break the pact [*Mīthāq*]. Rather, they fulfill covenants [*Mawāthīq*] and pledges [*ʿUhūd*].

They maintain and uphold that which Allāh has commanded to be maintained, who fear their Lord, and dread an evil reckoning [*Sūʾ al-Ḥisāb*], They maintain that which Allāh has commanded to be maintained by remaining upright upon the command [*Amr*] of Allāh, by sincerity [*Ikhlāṣ*] to Allāh {سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ}, and by following the *Sunnah* of the Messenger ﷺ.

Both of these are indispensable. The oneness of Allāh [*Tawḥīd*] is indispensable, and following the Messenger ﷺ is indispensable. And this must be connected to that, by realizing the two testimonies [*ash-Shahādatayn*]: That is, the *Shahādah* that none has the right to be worshipped except Allāh, and that Moḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh.

In the same way, they join faith [*Īmān*] with action [*ʿAmal*]. From that is dutifulness to parents [*Birr al-Wālidayn*] and maintaining the ties of kinship [*Ṣilatu-r-Raḥim*].

And they fear their Lord with the kind of fear [*Khashyah*] that helps them obey Allāh and keeps them away from acts of disobedience [*Maʿāṣī*] to Allāh. They fear Him {سُبْحَانَهُ} with a real fear [*Khashyah Ḥaqīqīyah*], not a mere claim. It is a fear that affects their hearts [*Qulūb*], making them humble [*Khāshiʿah*] before Allāh, submissive [*Khāḍiʿah*] to Him, magnifying His sacred limits [*Ḥurumāt*], abandoning His prohibitions [*Nawāhī*], and complying with His commands [*Awāmir*].

Such are the people of knowledge [*Ahl al-ʿIlm*] and faith [*Īmān*]. They fear their Lord with the kind of fear [*Khashyah*] that produces true compliance [*Mutābaʿah*], leads to the truth [*Ḥaqq*], and results in abandoning falsehood [*Bāṭil*].

And He {تَعَالَى} said:

{وَيَخَافُونَ سُوءَ الْحِسَابِ}

"*And they fear an evil reckoning [Sūʾ al-Ḥisāb].*" (***Sūrah ar-Raʿd***, 13:21)

This too is from the completeness of fear [*Khashyah*], namely their fear of an evil reckoning [*Sūʾ al-Ḥisāb*]. For that reason, they prepared themselves and remained upright upon the path [*Ṭarīq*], out of fear of an evil reckoning [*Sūʾ al-Ḥisāb*] on the Day of Resurrection [*Yawm al-Qiyāmah*].

Then He {سُبْحَانَهُ} mentioned the sixth and seventh qualities, and said {سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ}:

{وَالَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ}

"*And those who are patient, seeking the Face [Wajh] of their Lord, and establish the prayer [Ṣalāh].*" (***Sūrah ar-Raʿd***, 13:22)

They were patient in obedience [*Ṭāʿah*] to Allāh, and patient in keeping away from the sacred prohibitions [*Maḥārim*] of Allāh, not out of mere hardiness [*Tajallud*] nor out of showing off [*Riyāʾ*], but seeking the Face [*Wajh*] of Allāh and seeking nearness [*Zulfá*] to Him.

Such are the people of faith [*Īmān*] and the people who know Allāh. They remain patient through severities [*Shadāʾid*] in carrying out obedience [*Ṭāʿah*] to Allāh, in leaving acts of disobedience [*Maʿāṣī*] to Allāh, and in conveying the message [*Risālah*] of Allāh, while also establishing the prayer [*Ṣalāh*] and not neglecting anything that Allāh has made obligatory upon them from this tremendous act of worship [*ʿIbādah*], which is the pillar [*ʿAmūd*] of Islām. And they perform it as Allāh commanded.

Then He {سُبْحَانَهُ} mentioned the eighth and ninth qualities and said:

{وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً وَيَدْرَءُونَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ}

"*And they spend from what We have provided them, secretly and openly, and they repel evil [Sayyiʾah] with good [Ḥasanah].*" (***Sūrah ar-Raʿd***, 13:22)

The meaning is that, along with all of this, they spend in that which pleases Allāh and in doing good [*Iḥsān*] to His servants, secretly and openly, some of it seen by the people and some of it unseen by them. They seek the bounty [*Faḍl*] of Allāh, and seek His mercy [*Raḥmah*] and His beneficence [*Iḥsān*], through *Zakāh* and other than it. They discharge the alms [*Zakawāt*], and spend in the avenues [*Wujūh*] of goodness [*Khayr*] from what Allāh {سُبْحَانَهُ} has given them.

And His saying:

{وَيَدْرَءُونَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ}

"*And they repel evil [Sayyiʾah] with good [Ḥasanah]*"

means that they ward off evil deeds [*Sayyiʾāt*] by means of good deeds [*Ḥasanāt*], because of the completeness of their patience [*Ṣabr*], their forbearance [*Taḥammul*], and their restraining of anger [*Kaẓm al-Ghayẓ*]. Such are those who know Allāh [*al-ʿUlamā bi-llāh*], and such are the righteous [*Ṣulaḥāʾ*] among His servants.

Allāh {تَعَالَى} said:

{أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ}

"*For them is the good end [ʿUqbá ad-Dār].*" (***Sūrah ar-Raʿd***, 13:22)

They shall have the praiseworthy end [*al-ʿĀqibah al-Ḥamīdah*]. He explained it by His saying:

{جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ}

"*Gardens of perpetual residence [Jannāt ʿAdn] which they shall enter, and whoever was righteous [Ṣalaḥa] among their fathers, their spouses, and their offspring [Dhurrīyāt].*" (***Sūrah ar-Raʿd***, 13:23)

Part of their reward [*Thawāb*] for these previous deeds [*Aʿmāl*] is that Allāh, by His bounty [*Faḍl*] and His mercy [*Raḥmah*], includes with them their fathers, their offspring [*Dhurrīyāt*], and their spouses.

So remaining upright [*Istiqāmah*] upon the command [*Amr*] of Allāh, fulfilling His due right [*Ḥaqq*], commanding what is right [*al-Amr bi-l-Maʿrūf*], forbidding what is wrong [*an-Nahy ʿan al-Munkar*], remaining firm upon the truth [*Ḥaqq*], being patient [*Ṣabr*] upon that, and repelling evil [*Sayyiʾah*] with good [*Ḥasanah*], all of this is from the causes [*Asbāb*] of the righteousness [*Ṣalāḥ*] of the servant [*ʿAbd*], the righteousness [*Ṣalāḥ*] of his fathers, his spouses, and his offspring [*Dhurrīyah*], their being gathered together in the Abode of His honor [*Dār Karāmatih*], and the angels [*Malāʾikah*] visiting them, greeting them with peace [*Salām*] and welcoming them.

And from the tremendous blessings [*Niʿam ʿAẓīmah*] of Allāh upon the servant [*ʿAbd*] is that he be a cause for the guidance [*Hidāyah*] of his father, his mother, his wife, and his offspring [*Dhurrīyah*]. Likewise, from the tremendous blessings [*Niʿam ʿAẓīmah*] of Allāh upon the woman is that she be a cause for the guidance [*Hidāyah*] of her husband, her father, her mother, and her children.

And it is understood from the noble verse [*Āyah Karīmah*] that the entrance [*Dukhūl*] of fathers, spouses, and offspring into Paradise [*Jannah*] together with their relatives is only because of their righteousness [*Ṣalāḥ*], not merely because of lineage [*Nasab*] and kinship [*Qarābah*], but because of righteousness [*Ṣalāḥ*], uprightness [*Istiqāmah*], and striving [*Ijtihād*] in obedience [*Ṭāʿah*] to Allāh, which is the greatest means [*Wāsiṭah*] for the righteousness [*Ṣalāḥ*] of the servant [*ʿAbd*], his relatives, his wives, and his offspring [*Dhurrīyāt*], and for their being gathered together in the Abode of His honor [*Dār Karāmatih*].

This noble verse [*Āyah Karīmah*] resembles His saying {تَعَالَى} in *Sūrah Sabaʾ*:

{وَمَا أَمۡوَٰلُكُمۡ وَلَآ أَوۡلَٰدُكُم بِٱلَّتِي تُقَرِّبُكُمۡ عِندَنَا زُلۡفَىٰٓ إِلَّا مَنۡ ءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَٰلِحٗا فَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ لَهُمۡ جَزَآءُ ٱلضِّعۡفِ بِمَا عَمِلُواْ وَهُمۡ فِي ٱلۡغُرُفَٰتِ ءَامِنُونَ}

"*And it is not your wealth [Amwāl] nor your children [Awlād] that bring you near to Us in nearness [Zulfá], but only those who believe [Āmana] and do righteous deeds [ʿAmila Ṣāliḥan]. For them there will be multiplied reward [Jazāʾ aḍ-Ḍiʿf] for what they did, and they shall be safe in the lofty chambers [al-Ghurufāt].*" (***Sūrah Saba'***, 34:37)

And His saying {تَعَالَى} in *Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt*:

{يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقۡنَٰكُم مِّن ذَكَرٖ وَأُنثَىٰ وَجَعَلۡنَٰكُمۡ شُعُوبٗا وَقَبَآئِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوٓاْۚ إِنَّ أَكۡرَمَكُمۡ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ أَتۡقَىٰكُمۡۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٞ}

"*O mankind, indeed We created you from a male and a female, and made you peoples [Shuʿūb] and tribes [Qabāʾil] so that you may know one another. Indeed, the most honorable [Akram] of you in the sight of Allāh is the one with the most piety [Taqwá]. Indeed, Allāh is All-Knowing, All-Aware.*" (***Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt***, 49:13)

And likewise, are the other noble verses [*Āyāt Karīmāt*] that have come with this meaning. All of them make clear that the lofty ranks [*Manāzil ʿĀliyah*], triumph [*Fawz*] with the Gardens of Bliss [*Jannāt an-Naʿīm*], and safety [*Salāmah*] from the punishment [*ʿAdhāb*] of Allāh and His anger [*Ghaḍab*], none of that is attained merely by wishful thinking [*Amānī*] and claims [*Daʿāwá*], nor by lineages [*Ansāb*] and claims [*Daʿāwá*].

Rather, that is only attained, after the granting of success [*Tawfīq*] from Allāh and His mercy [*Raḥmah*], through the means [*Asbāb*] of patience [*Ṣabr*] in obedience [*Ṭāʿah*] to Allāh, patience [*Ṣabr*] in keeping away from His sacred prohibitions [*Maḥārim*], turning fully to Him {سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ}, sincerity [*Ikhlāṣ*] to Him in deed [*ʿAmal*], humble imploring [*Ḍarāʿah*] to Him in seeking *Tawfīq* and guidance [*Hidāyah*], together with patience [*Ṣabr*] through severities [*Shadāʾid*] and difficulties [*Mashāqq*] in the cause of the truth [*Ḥaqq*], and patience [*Ṣabr*] through afflictions [*Maṣāʾib*].

By all of this they attained the tremendous good [*Khayr ʿAẓīm*] and triumph [*Fawz*] with the Abode of Bliss [*Dār an-Naʿīm*].

And thus it is fitting for the people of faith [*Ahl al-Īmān*], the people of knowledge [*Ahl al-ʿIlm*], and the people of guidance [*Ahl al-Hudá*] to embody these tremendous qualities [*Akhlāq ʿAẓīmah*] and to proceed upon them, so that the praiseworthy end [*al-ʿĀqibah al-Ḥamīdah*] may be theirs, and so that theirs may be the final good end [*ʿUqbá ad-Dār*].

So, patience [*Ṣabr*] is indispensable, sincerity [*Ikhlāṣ*] is indispensable, and truthfulness [*Ṣidq*] is indispensable.

Allāh {تَعَالَىٰ} said in *Sūrah al-Insān*:

{وَجَزَاهُمْ بِمَا صَبَرُوا جَنَّةً وَحَرِيرًا}

"*And He rewarded them, for their patience [Ṣabr], with Paradise [Jannah] and silk [Ḥarīr].*" (***Sūrah al-Insān***, 76:12)

And He {سُبْحَانَهُ} said in *Sūrah al-Muʾminūn*:

{إِنِّي جَزَيْتُهُمُ الْيَوْمَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ}

"*Indeed, I have rewarded them this Day for their patience [Ṣabr], because they are the triumphant ones [al-Fāʾizūn].*" (***Sūrah al-Muʾminūn***, 23:111)

And in *Sūrah al-Furqān*, after mentioning the tremendous qualities [*Ṣifāt ʿAẓīmah*] of the servants of the Most Merciful [*ʿIbād ar-Raḥmān*], He said:

{أُولَٰئِكَ يُجْزَوْنَ الْغُرْفَةَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَيُلَقَّوْنَ فِيهَا تَحِيَّةً وَسَلَامًا}

"*Those will be rewarded with the lofty chamber [al-Ghurfah] for their patience [Ṣabr], and they will be received therein with greeting [Taḥīyah] and peace [Salām].*" (***Sūrah al-Furqān***, 25:75)

So, these praiseworthy qualities [*Khiṣāl Ḥamīdah*] that He mentioned in His saying:

{وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا}

"*And the servants of the Most Merciful [ʿIbād ar-Raḥmān] are those who walk upon the earth gently [Hawnan].*" (***Sūrah al-Furqān***, 25:63)

these were attained by their patience [*Ṣabr*] in obedience [*Ṭāʿah*] to Allāh, their patience [*Ṣabr*] in keeping away from the prohibitions [*Maḥārim*] of Allāh, and their patience [*Ṣabr*] in the face of afflictions [*Maṣāʾib*].

So careful attention [*al-ʿInāyah*] to this matter [*Amr*] is indispensable, and we must prepare ourselves for it. And the student of knowledge [*Ṭālib al-ʿIlm*] must know that patience [*Ṣabr*] is absolutely indispensable, and that tremendous deeds [*Aʿmāl ʿAẓīmah*] and abundant good [*Khayr Kathīr*] are not attained merely by claims [*Daʿāwá*], desire [*Raghbah*], and wishful thinking [*Tamannī*] without action [*ʿAmal*] and patience [*Ṣabr*].

I ask Allāh {تَعَالَى}, by His Names [*Asmāʾ*] and Attributes [*Ṣifāt*], to grant us and all the Muslims beneficial knowledge [*ʿIlm Nāfiʿ*] and righteous deeds [*ʿAmal Ṣāliḥ*], and to grant us all the embodiment of the ethics [*Akhlāq*] of the people of knowledge [*Ahl al-ʿIlm*] and faith [*Īmān*], the ethics [*Akhlāq*] of the Messengers and those who follow them with excellence [*Iḥsān*].

And I ask Him to increase us and all the Muslims in beneficial knowledge [*ʿIlm Nāfiʿ*], righteous deeds [*ʿAmal Ṣāliḥ*], and far-reaching insight [*Baṣīrah Nāfidhah*], and to protect us all from the evils [*Shurūr*] of our souls [*Nufūs*] and from the evil deeds [*Sayyiʾāt*] of our actions [*Aʿmāl*].

And we also ask Him {سُبْحَانَهُ} to grant success [*Tawfīq*] to those entrusted with the affairs [*Umūr*] of the Muslims in every place, in all that contains His pleasure [*Riḍā*] and the welfare [*Ṣalāḥ*] of the servants [*ʿIbād*], and that He rectify the leaders [*Qādah*] of the Muslims and aid them in obedience [*Ṭāʿah*] to Allāh and His Messenger ﷺ, and that He grant them success to govern by His *Sharīʿah*, to adhere to it, to refer judgment [*Taḥākum*] back to it, and to beware of all that opposes it.

And I also ask Him {عَزَّ وَجَلَّ} to rectify the conditions [*Aḥwāl*] of the Muslims in every place, to grant them understanding [*Fiqh*] in the religion [*Dīn*], to aid them in His remembrance [*Dhikr*], His gratitude [*Shukr*], and beautiful worship [*Ḥusn ʿIbādah*] of Him, and to protect us and all the Muslims from everything that opposes His legislation [*Sharʿ*]. Indeed, He {جَلَّ وَعَلَا} is the Guardian [*Walī*] of that and the One fully able [*Qādir*] to do it.

And may Allāh send prayers, peace, and blessings upon His servant and Messenger, our Prophet Moḥammad, and upon his family [*Āl*], his Companions [*Aṣḥāb*], and his followers [*Atbāᶜ*] in excellence [*Iḥsān*] until the Day of Recompense [*Yawm ad-Dīn*].

[1] *A lecture delivered by the Shaykh at Umm al-Qurá University in Makkah al-Mukarramah in the month of Rajab, 1409H. (Majmūᶜ Fatāwá wa-Maqālāt ash-Shaykh Ibn Bāz, volume 4)*